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## Exploration and Discovery

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At a recent sitting of the Vorderasiatische Gesellschaft, Professor Hugo Winckler offered some interesting remarks on the excavations of the French archæologists in Susa. The most important of the recent results in Susa are to be found in an inscription in an entirely new script, the elements of which are not wedges—an inscription which is arranged in vertical columns beneath two columns of old Babylonian cuneiform. As the upper inscription deals with a king who is known to have ruled at the beginning of the third thousand years before Christ, it is highly probable that the unknown script is to be dated in the same age. We thus stand in the presence of a problem involving a new system of writing for a period of the remotest antiquity. Since the discovery of this singular inscription the French excavators have turned up a great number of clay tablets bearing writing of the same character. These tablets, in view of their form and the great quantities in which they have been found, are evidently business documents. Whether this be the script writing of the Babylonians, or the first examples coming under our notice of a more ancient method of writing from hither Asia, to which possibly the early Babylonians owe their system of writing, is a problem of which nothing can yet be said. It is possible that we stand here on the threshold of new revelations from a remote age and an earlier civilization than that of the earliest Babylonian kingdoms.

THE French archæologist, Gayet, has been continuing his excavations in Antinoë, with great success, and an exhibition of his discoveries has recently been held in Paris. These discoveries, which date for the most part from the Græco-Roman and Roman ages, are of great importance to classical archæologists, and among them are found survivals of important branches of classical art which are very scantily represented in the lands to which they owe their origin.

In the suburbs of Jerusalem, on the property of the Syrian Orphan Asylum, an ancient tomb containing inscriptions has recently been excavated. It belongs to a time when Aramaic and Greek were spoken, side by side, in Palestine—that is, probably in 300 to 600 years after Christ. As the tomb had been undisturbed, the objects found in it and the inscriptions are of some importance. It belonged to a family named Basani, which probably came from Beisan to Jerusalem. The Syrian Asylum has had the tomb and the stone sarcophagi photographed, and duplicates of these photographs can be secured.